Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, line 28 through page 6, line 4, with the following amended paragraph:

-- In one aspect of the invention, the polymer is linked to amino terminal of the IFN-*beta* 1b, while in other separate and preferred aspects of the invention the polymer is attached via an epsilon amino group of a Lys of the IFN-*beta* 1b. Depending upon the site of attachment and molecular weight of the polymer selected, retained anti-viral activities for the conjugates will range from at least about 65 percent for the 30 kDa polymer conjugates and at least about 15% for the 40 kDa polymer conjugates. In both cases, the amount of retained activity is significantly greater than that which was expected. In particular, at least about 20 percent, or at least about 65 percent, of the antiviral activity is retained relative to native interferon-*beta* 1b, using the EMC/Vero or EMC/A549 antiviral bioassay. --

Please insert the following new paragraph at page 7, after line 18:

-- In another related aspect of the invention, the protein is interferon-*beta* 1b and a method is provided for preparing a biologically active polymer-interferon conjugate composition, comprising reacting interferon-*beta* 1b with an activated polyalkylene oxide polymer having a molecular weight of at least about 30 kDa under conditions sufficient to cause conjugation of the activated polyalkylene oxide polymer to the interferon-*beta* 1b, purifying the resulting conjugate and resuspending the conjugate in a buffered solution having a pH range of about 3.0 to about 8.0, wherein said solution optionally contains an excipient and a surfactant and wherein said composition retains at least about 20% of the antiviral activity is retained relative to native interferon-*beta* 1b, using the EMC/Vero or EMC/A549 antiviral bioassay. --